

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-05 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 IO-10

/065 W

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O 211755Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6356

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR

DIA WASHDC

S E C R E T ATHENS 8360

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT GR

SUBJ: GREEK ELECTION

REF TOSEC 23

DEPARTMENT PASS SECRETARY

1. THERE IS NO REPEAT NO DOUBT THAT FROM THE STANDPOINT OF U.S. AND WESTERN INTERESTS THE RESULTS OF THE NOVEMBER 17 GREEK ELECTION WERE EXTREMELY REASSURING. NOT ONLY WAS CARAMANLIS GIVEN THE STRONGEST MANDATE THAT ANY GREEK PRIME MINISTER HAS RECEIVED IN MODERN HISTORY, BUT THE VOTERS CLEARLY REJECTED THE RECKLESS PROGRAM FOR A "NON-ALIGNED" GREECE ADVOCATED BY ANDREAS PAPANDREOU AND THE QUIETER BUT NO LESS DANGEROUS ALTERNATIVES PROPOSED BY THE GREEK COMMUNISTS. THAT THE VOTERS WERE BOTH THOUGHTFUL AND SELECTIVE IS INDICATED IN THE OVERALL VERDICT AND, FOR THE MOST PART, IN THEIR CHOICE OF INDIVIDUAL CANDIDATES. AMONG WOMEN CANDIDATES

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THEY PREFERRED THE INTELLIGENCE AND SERIOUS AMERICAN-

TRAINED SOCIOLOGIST, VIRGINIA TSOUDEROUS TO THE FLASHY BUT ESSENTIALLY FRIVOLOUS CANDIDACY OF MELINA MERCOURI. AMONG RESISTANCE CANDIDATES THEY GAVE MORE VOTES TO THE RESPECTED IF SOMEWHAT ENIGMATIC ANASTASSIOS MINIS THEN TO THE WIDELY-KNOWN BUT ERRATIC ALEXANDER PANAGOULIS. THE JUDICIOUSNESS WITH WHICH THE GREEK VOTER CAST HIS BALLOT SHOULD PROVIDE THE COUNTRY NOT ONLY WITH AN EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT UNDER MODERATE LEADERSHIP BUT WITH AN EFFECTIVE AND, BY GREEK STANDARDS, RESPONSIBLE PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION.

2. WE THEREFORE AGREE WITH THE PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS DRAWN BY INR IN THEIR PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF THE GREEK ELECTIONS CONTAINED IN REFTEL. WE WOULD, HOWEVER, SINGLE OUT THREE POINTS MADE BY INR WHICH SHOULD BE TREATED WITH CAUTION.

3. THE FIRST CONCERNS CARAMANLIS' ATTITUDE TOWARD NATO. AS WE HAVE STATED IN PREVIOUS MESSAGES, CARAMANLIS IS WITHOUT QUESTION A MAN OF THE WEST WHO HARBORS NO ILLUSIONS THAT GREECE COULD BE EITHER NON-ALIGNED OR AN ALLY OF THE EASTERN EUROPEANS. THIS IS NOT TO SAY, HOWEVER, THAT HE IS IN A POSITION OR EVEN WISHES TO "REVERSE" THE LIMITED, THUS FAR LARGELY RHETORICAL WITHDRAWAL FROM NATO THAT GREECE HAS UNDERTAKEN UNDER HIS DIRECTION DURING THE PAST THREE MONTHS. CERTAINLY HE HAS NEITHER THE WISH NOR THE CAPABILITY OF DOING SO UNTIL GREECE'S RELATIONS WITH TURKEY IMPROVE MATERIALLY, A PROCESS WHICH CANNOT BEGIN UNTIL A CYPRUS SETTLEMENT ACCEPTABLE TO GREECE HAS BEEN ACHIEVED, AND WILL NOT BE AUTOMATIC EVEN THEN. THE PRIME MINISTER'S ELECTORAL TRIUMPH MEANS THAT HE IS UNDER NO IMMEDIATE PRESSURE TO DISENGAGE GREECE FURTHER FROM NATO, BUT THE DAMAGE ALREADY DONE CANNOT BE REPAIRED UNTIL SOMETHING APPROACHING MUTUAL CONFIDENCE HAS BEEN RESTORED IN THE BILATERAL RELATIONS OF GREECE AND TURKEY. SHOULD BILATERAL RELATIONS DETERIORATE UNDER PRESSURES OF THE CYPRUS PROBLEM OR SOME OTHER ISSUE, THE ADVERSE EFFECT ON GREECE'S RELATIONS WITH NATO WOULD BE PROPORTIONATE.

4. AS FAR AS CYPRUS IS CONCERNED, WE BELIEVE THAT THE  
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MAGNITUDE OF CARAMANLIS' VICTORY HAS IMPLICATIONS WHICH CUT TWO WAYS. IT IS TRUE THAT HE IS STRONG ENOUGH TO MAKE A SETTLEMENT ONCE CONVINCED THAT THE SETTLEMENT PROTECTS VITAL GREEK INTERESTS. IT IS EQUALLY TRUE THAT HE IS STRONG ENOUGH TO RESIST A SETTLEMENT IF CONVINCED THAT IT DOES NOT. PRIOR TO THE ELECTIONS, AT THE TIME OF GENEVA II, WE BELIEVED THAT CARAMANLIS WAS ANXIOUS TO EFFECT A SPEEDY COMPROMISE

AGREEMENT WITHIN FAIRLY LIBERAL PARAMETERS OF COMPROMISE. AT THAT TIME HE COULD DEPICT GREEK CONCESSIONS AS PAYMENTS THAT HAD TO BE MADE FOR THE MISTAKES OF THE COLONELS. THAT SITUATION HAS NOW CHANGED. HE IS THE POPULARLY ELECTED LEADER OF GREECE, AND CYPRUS HAS BECOME HIS PROBLEM, NOT SIMPLY ONE HE INHERITED FROM THE JUNTA. THIS MAY MAKE HIM LESS DISPOSED TO OFFER FURTHER CONCESSIONS THAN HE WAS PRIOR TO THE ELECTIONS, ALTHOUGH IT WILL NOT LESSEN HIS APPRECIATION OF THE DANGERS THE CYPRUS PROBLEM POSES FOR HIM POLITICALLY IF IT CONTINUES TO FESTER.

5. LASTLY, WE BELIEVE THAT IT IS AN OVERSIMPLIFICATION TO SAY THAT THE GREEK ARMED FORCES ARE PROBABLY "HIGHLY SATISFIED" WITH CARAMANLIS' DECISIVE VICTORY. WHILE WE ALSO DISCOUNT HEAVILY THE CONTINUED REPORTS WE ARE RECEIVING ABOUT RIGHT WING PLOTTING AND DISCONTENT IN THE HELLENIC ARMED FORCES, WE DO NOT THINK THAT THE MORALE OF THE GREEK MILITARY HAS YET RECOVERED FROM THE BUFFETING IT HAS RECEIVED IN RECENT MONTHS OR, AT A DEEPER LEVEL, FROM THE CUMULATIVE EFFECT OF SEVEN YEARS OF LEADERSHIP BY OFFICERS WHO VALUED POLITICAL RELIABILITY MORE THAN MILITARY COMPETENCE. IT WILL TAKE ALL OF THE SKILL OF CARAMANLIS AND AVEROFF TO REBUILD THE GREEK ARMED FORCES INTO THE PROFESSIONAL FIGHTING CORPS THEY ARE CAPABLE OF BEING. UNTIL THE PRIME MINISTER SUCCEEDS IN DOING THIS, IT WILL BE RISKY TO GENERALIZE ABOUT THEIR ATTITUDE. KUBISCH

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** ELECTION RESULTS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 21 NOV 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** CollinP0  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1974ATHENS08360  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Office:** ACTION EUR  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
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**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** TOSEC 23  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** CollinP0  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 20 MAY 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <20 MAY 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <21 MAR 2003 by CollinP0>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** GREEK ELECTION  
**TAGS:** PINT, GR, US  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005